



# Support Language in HB 59 to Unbundle Complex Wheelchairs for Nursing Facility Residents

## What is multiple sclerosis (MS)?

- MS is an unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system.
- MS interrupts the flow of information within the brain, and between the brain and body.
- Symptoms range from numbness and tingling to blindness and paralysis.
- The progress, severity and specific symptoms of MS in any one person cannot yet be predicted.
- Approximately 20,000 Ohioans are living with MS.

## The Medical Impact

Improperly fitted wheelchairs and mobility devices can lead to a host of medical problems including pressure ulcers, also known as bed sores, pressure sores, or decubitus ulcers, are wounds caused by unrelieved pressure on the skin. Key findings from the Centers for Disease Control Nursing Home Survey in 2004 found:

- about 159,000 current U.S. nursing home residents (11%) had pressure ulcers. Stage 2 pressure ulcers were the most common.
- Residents aged 64 years and under were more likely than older residents to have pressure ulcers.
- Residents of nursing homes for a year or less were more likely to have pressure ulcers than those with longer stays.

Pressure ulcers are serious medical conditions and one of the important measures of the quality of clinical care in nursing homes. From about 2% to 28% of nursing home residents have pressure ulcers.

Complications due to pressure ulcers can include cellulitis, sepsis, bone and joint infections and cancer and can result in hospitalization. "AHRQ estimates that the average pressure ulcer-related hospital stay extends to between 13 and 14 days and costs between \$16,755 and \$20,430, depending on medical circumstances." - "Positive Outcomes of Culture Change - The Case for Adoption," Tools for Change, vol.1, no 2, April 2011, the Pioneer Network.

**Position:** The National Multiple Sclerosis Society urges the unbundling of complex wheelchairs from ancillary service cost in nursing facilities. The unintended results of this bundling have drastically decreased the quality of life of an already vulnerable population.

*In 2009 Ohio law changed how ancillary services in nursing facilities are funded. Certain ancillary services provided to Medicaid residents in nursing facilities must now be paid for by the nursing home, where as they had been previously paid for directly from Medicaid under a "fee for service payment structure".*

*As a result the nursing facility's per diem rate was increased to pay them directly for ancillary services needed on behalf of Medicaid residents. The per diem payment of \$3.91 is an across the board average cost estimate. This per diem may be enough to cover services for some patients, but not all patients. Patients with MS have considerably greater need and higher per diem cost.*

While only 5-10% of persons with MS need chronic nursing home care, these needs are targeted and specialized. As compared to the frail elderly nursing home resident, residents with MS in nursing homes tend to:

- Be younger
- Be more mentally alert
- Be more physically dependent
- Present with more symptoms of depression and have longer lengths of stay

As a result customized rehabilitation mobility equipment, including sophisticated motorized wheelchairs with complex seating, are often a necessary component in maintaining the quality of life of a person with MS. These devices are needed to:

- Improve comfort, independence, and mobility
- Prevent secondary complications such as skin breakdown, postural deformities/contractures, and compromised breathing